

SUPPORTING STUDENTS AT OR BELOW THE 1ST PERCENTILE FOR RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

Students at Marshfields increasingly join the school with Educational Psychologist (EP) assessments placing them at or below the 1st percentile for receptive language.

What does this mean for staff at the school?

PERCENTILE SCORES

Percentiles are a way of comparing an individual student's cognitive ability to their peers. In percentiles, 50% is the mid-point. A normal score would fall between 16 and 85. Therefore, if a student scores 50, then it is expected that 50% of their peers would score better than them and 50% would score worse.

If a student scored 15%, 14% would score lower and 85% would score higher.

If a student scored at or below the 1% for receptive language, at least 99% of students their age would score higher than them.

In the special score banding matrix, students at or below the 1% for receptive language would be placed in Band 3 to recognise that they will need significant support to engage in learning.

RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

A receptive language disorder is one in which a child struggles to understand and process the messages and information they receive from others. Receptive language is the 'input' of language. It is the ability to understand and comprehend spoken language that a student hears or reads.

A percentile score of less than 1% for receptive language would be classed as a receptive language disorder.

For example, a child's ability to listen and follow directions (e.g. 'put on your coat') relies on the child's receptive language skills.

DIFFICULTIES YOU SHOULD EXPECT

A student with low receptive language will struggle to:

- Follow directions, particularly when if the instruction has multiple parts. For example, 'open your books, start a new page, write the title and the date.' There are 4 parts to this instruction. A student with low receptive language will not hear this instruction.
- Understanding conversation.
- Answering questions accurately and appropriately.
- Answering questions in a 'quick fire' way.
- Learn new words. If you introduce 3 or 4 new words in a single lesson, they will not be able to access the learning.
- Understanding stories.

- Recognising inference.
- Using correct verb tenses, pronouns, plurals, etc.
- Understanding and responding appropriately to social situations.
- Asking for their needs to be met.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT

At Marshfields, whole-school strategies support students with a receptive language disorder. This include:

- Using visual clues, for example DSLs wear bumble-bee pins. Bee safe = safeguarding.
- Ensuring that staffing ratios in the classroom are around 1:8.
- Using assessment tools to develop speech and language across the curriculum.
- Continuously developing student information held on the SEND spreadsheet, specifically with Dos and Don'ts. For example: do allow at least 20 seconds for me to answer your question.
- Using agreed phrases, for example all our lesson objectives begin with 'I can.'

Several simple classroom strategies can ensure students with low receptive language are able to access the learning:

- Red, amber and green sheets in student planners should be used by all staff to allow students to communicate stuck, help please and I am fine.
- Do not allow students with higher receptive language skills to dominate discussion.
- Ensure all students have opportunity to speak using 1:1 questioning as well as class discussion.
- Use sign language. The free BSL app has a wealth of signs. All students at the school would benefit from knowing signing.
- When a child is talking, practice looking at them. Resist interrupting them even when you think you know what they are trying to say.
- Reduce key words to a minimum. When you introduce new words use them multiple times in multiple ways. Ask students to repeat them, write them, use them. Give visual prompts. Use Clicker7.
- If a student has a communication plan, read and follow it.
- If you need to give instructions with multiple parts, make sure students have a visual checklist:
 - Open your book
 - Take a new page
 - Write the title
 - Write the date
 - Etc

Students with low receptive language will need to be taught how to use a reader and scribe in an exam or assessment. This should be the student's normal way of working.